

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 PM-07 H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12 ACDA-19

OMB-01 TRSE-00 EB-11 AID-20 MC-02 IGA-02 EUR-25 /163 W
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P 281422 Z JUN 73

FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2373

INFO DOD/ DSAA- ISA/ WASHDC PRIORITY

USCINCEUR/ VAIHINGEN, GERMANY

CNO WASHDC

S E C R E T TUNIS 3743

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, TS

SUBJECT: TUNISIAN REQUEST FOR USG MILITARY ASSISTANCE

REF: (A) TUNIS 0867; (B) STATE 066167; (C) TUNIS 1931; (D) TUNIS
2077; (E) TUNIS 3164; (F) STATE 124539

1. IN FEBRUARY 1973 MINISTER OF DEFENSE FARHAT CALLED
AMBASSADOR SEELYE TO HIS OFFICE TO DISCUSS LONG TERM
FINANCING OF EQUIPMENT FOR TUNISIAN MILITARY (TUNIS 0867).
STATE 066167 PROVIDED GUIDANCE ON PROPOSED RESPONSE TO GOT
REQUEST. BECAUSE OF NEGATIVE NATURE OF RESPONSE, AMBASSADOR
FELT IT WAS POLITICALLY DESIRABLE TO DELAY RESPONSE PENDING
DECISION ON NAVY- TO- NAVY LOAN OF EXCESS VESSEL (S) AND
REPLACEMENT AIRCRAFT FOR F-86 (TUNIS 1931 AND 2077). FAVORABLE
CONSIDERATION WOULD HAVE HAD POSITIVE POLITICAL/ MILITARY
EFFECT AND TAKE STING OUT OF GENERALLY UNFAVORABLE MILITARY
ASSISTANCE OUTLOOK FOR FUTURE.

2. I FEEL THAT IT WOULD NOT BE PRUDENT TO DELAY FURTHER
AND AM ARRANGING A MEETING WITH FARHAT DURING PERIOD 2 - 7
JULY (PROBABLY 5 JULY). FARHAT RAISED THE SUBJECT WITH
ME INFORMALLY ON JUNE 26 AT A RECEPTION, AND HE HAD PRE-
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VIOUSLY ASKED COLONEL BUTLER (CHUSLOT) AND RADM TURNER (SIXTHFLT) ON JUNE 23 WHEN HE COULD EXPECT RESPONSE TO HIS FEBRUARY REQUEST FOR USG ASSISTANCE IN FINANCING MULTIYEAR ARMS ACQUISITION PROGRAM.

3. STATE'S 124539 ON REPLACEMENT AIRCRAFT IS VERY HELPFUL AND TIMELY, ALTHOUGH WE REALIZE WE CANNOT MAKE COMMITMENT, BELIEVE GOT STILL INTERESTED IN A-4 B/ C ACFT PROVIDED SUPPORTABILITY CONTINUES FOR 10 TO 15 YEARS. WITH REGARD TO SHIP LOAN, NUMEROUS CABLES BETWEEN CNO AND CHUSLOT INDICATE DER COULD BE MADE AVAILABLE AT AN ACQUISITION COST OF ABOUT 450 THOUSAND DOLLARS. ALTHOUGH PG (ASHVILLE CLASS) WOULD BE MORE DESIRABLE, GOT HAS EXPRESSED INTEREST IN DER FOR COMMAND/ CONTROL, TRAINING AND PATROL PURPOSES, WE BELIEVE GOT WOULD ACCEPT DER IF OFFERED AND WE CONSIDER SUCH AN OFFER WOULD BE A POLITICAL PLUS.

4. FOLLOW- UP ACTION REQUESTED FROM WASHINGTON

A. REQUEST LATEST THINKING ON LOAN OF NAVAL VESSEL. A FAVORABLE RESPONSE PRIOR TO MY MEETING WITH FARHAT WOULD BE BENEFICIAL.

B. REQUEST YOUR COMMENTS ON PROPOSED APPROACH TO MINISTER FARHAT AS CONTAINED IN PARAGRAPH 5 BELOW.

5. PROPOSED APPROACH.

A. AS OUR RECORD OVER YEARS SHOW, USG IS INTERESTED IN TUNISIAN SECURITY AND WANTS TO CONTINUE SOME FORM OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO TUNISIA. HOWEVER, MILITARY ASSISTANCE IS SUBJECT TO ANNUAL APPROVAL BY CONGRESS AND THUS USG CANNOT GIVE ASSURANCES RE FUTURE USG MAP BECAUSE ANNUAL CONGRESSIONAL APPROPRIATIONS PRECLUDE PROJECTION FOR MORE THAN ONE YEAR IN ADVANCE.

B. AS AMBASSADOR INDICATED EARLIER, GRANT AID IS BEING PHASED OUT AND FUTURE ASSISTANCE WILL PROBABLY BE IN THE FORM OF FMS. CONGRESS IS CURRENTLY REVIEWING FUTURE DIRECTION OF MAP PROGRAM.

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C. IN CIRCUMSTANCES, WE DO NOT ANTICIPATE SUFFICIENT USG FINANCING TO ALLOW GOT TO PROCEED WITH WHOLLY US- FINANCED ARMS ACQUISITION PROGRAM WHICH TOTALS 42 MILLION DOLLARS OVER SIX- YEAR PERIOD. WE CAN REPORT THAT THE ADMINISTRATION'S REQUEST TO CONGRESS FOR FY 74 IS 2.5 MILLION IN GRANT AID AND 2.5 MILLION IN FMS. FINAL TOTAL MUST AWAIT CONGRESSIONAL ACTION.

D. USG IS WILLING TO CONSIDER FOLLOW- ON AIRCRAFT NEEDS. BECAUSE OF WORLDWIDE COMMITMENTS AND LIMITED AVAILABILITY, THE ONLY AIRCRAFT WHICH MIGHT BE OFFERED IN IMMEDIATE FUTURE IS THE A-4 B/ C. IF THIS AIRCRAFT IS GENERALLY ACCEPTABLE TO GOT WE WILL CONTINUE TO EXPLORE POSSIBILITY WITH WASHINGTON. WE WOULD HOPE TO ACQUIRE THE AIRCRAFT FOR MODERNIZATION AND REHAB COST PLUS GROUND ENVIRONMENT, MAINTENANCE AND CSP COSTS. GOT WOULD HAVE TO BEAR THESE EXPENSES WHICH WE ROUGHLY ESTIMATE WOULD AVERAGE ABOUT 500,000 DOLLARS PER AIRCRAFT.

E. WITH REGARD TO NAVAL ASSISTANCE, WE ARE EXPLORING POSSIBILITY OF PROVIDING DER. THIS TYPE VESSEL IS OLD BUT OPERATIVE AND WILL PROVIDE THE COMMAND/ CONTROL AND TRAINING VESSEL DESIRED. WE WILL PROVIDE DETAILS LATER BUT IT MUST BE STRESSED THAT SHOULD THIS BE APPROVED IT WOULD BE A ONE- TIME TRANSACTION WITHOUT COMMITMENT FOR FURTHER FOLLOW- ON NAVAL ASSISTANCE AND GOT WOULD PAY REHABILITATION, TRANSPORT AND MAINTENANCE COSTS WHICH ARE ESTIMATED TO BE 450 THOUSAND DOLLARS. RELPH

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